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Language norms in ELF*

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INTRODUCTION

The question of language norms and normativity is central to studies on English as a lingua franca (ELF). It is relevant from the perspective of descriptions of ELF (what norms do ELF users draw on?), speaker orientations to norms (what counts as "good English" for different ELF users?) and the perspective of pedagogical applications (which norms, and to what extent, are relevant for English teaching?). In this chapter, we provide an overview of the concept of language norms, review recent research on normativity in ELF and discuss how the notion of language regulation can be used to analyse ELF settings.

Much of the descriptive research on ELF has been concerned with the ways in which ELF communication differs from English used as a native language. The use of English as a native language (ENL) as a point of comparison is necessary "in order to discern variation and innovation in ELF" (Mauranen 2005: 275). Indeed, ELF research has shown that non-conformity to ENL may be functionally motivated and even enhance mutual understanding (e.g. Björkman 2013; Cogo 2009), and in this sense, ELF research can be seen to "document ELF users' degree of independence of ENL norms" (Seidlhofer 2009: 242). However, approaching ELF use in terms of how it diverges from ENL may be problematic if the analysis is mainly interested in mapping *non*-conformity and not the whole variety of normative orientations that participants in an ELF interaction might adopt, including moments when codified norms are made relevant (or imposed). On the whole, more attention has been directed at the creativity of individual ELF users than the processes through which norms are negotiated between individuals in particular interactions. We start from the assumption that ELF research also needs to consider the ways in which speakers construe what is "acceptable", "functional", or "correct" for them in specific ELF settings, which might also include a role for ENL norms.

Within the ELF paradigm, there is relatively little conceptual discussion about language norms. In fact, Blommaert (2006: 520) claims that the notion of norms is "often invoked but rarely theorised" in (socio)linguistics in general (see also Piippo 2012). Thus, there is a need for

a more in-depth discussion of language norms not only within ELF research, but also beyond. There is also a need for conceptual clarity: as Mauranen (2012) points out, a term such as "native-speaker norms" can be used to refer both to prescriptive norms and to a corpus-based understanding of native-like usage, the latter of which is much more accommodating of variety.

In the chapter, we discuss a number of different ways of conceptualising language norms, especially in terms of what they can give to the analysis of ELF. We also illustrate how language norms can be studied using the notion of language regulation. We approach both language norms and ELF from a social perspective. In line with, for example, Mauranen (2012) and Seidlhofer (2011), we define lingua franca use from a situation-based perspective, not in terms of shared features: English used as a lingua franca is a "vehicular language used by speakers who do not share a first language" (Mauranen 2012: 8). That is, we understand ELF as context-bound, functionally driven language use, not as a stable variety (see Jenkins 2015 for a discussion on defining ELF).

In the following, we first outline three possible meanings of the term "language norms", after which we move on to suggest a focus on language regulation as a means to empirically investigate how norms are created, maintained and negotiated. We then illustrate our approach with examples from ELF data from academic contexts. Our discussion mainly concerns spoken language, but it will also briefly touch on issues related to writing. While we will not consider ELF and English language teaching (ELT) in any detail in this chapter, the discussion has relevance for pedagogical debates as well (on ELF and language norms in ELT, see Dewey 2012).

THE CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE NORMS

There are a number of typologically oriented characterisations of language norms, distinguishing between different types of norms (see e.g. Andersen 2009 on declarative vs. deontic norms; Bamgboşe 1998 on code norm, feature norm vs. behavioural norm; for a review, see Hynninen 2016). For the purposes of a discussion of language norms in ELF we argue that the following three understandings of the concept are most important.

a. Norms describe *what is common* in a particular setting.

In this meaning, language norms refer to how members of a particular community habitually behave linguistically. Norms can be identified by analysing usage, on the basis of recurring instances of behaviour. Evidence on recurrence and sharedness can be gained for example through corpora. Such norms are not understood as being upheld through codification or sanctions, but through repeated usage and the gradual achievement of acceptance in a given community.

Corpus evidence can be used to gain access to what kinds of regularities there are in lingua franca interactions, that is, what is typical and recurrent when English is used as a shared language by second language (L2) speakers (see e.g. Mauranen 2012; Ranta 2013). Thus, corpora allow us to make judgments about usage-based norms for ELF. Importantly, corpora are also used to show that ELF interactions are not non-normative ("anything goes"): there is regularity in ELF usage.

Many ELF communities are relatively transient and short-lived and it may therefore be difficult to think of them in terms of typification or sharedness. It can be assumed, however, that speakers who frequently participate in interactions where English is used in such a way develop "habits" and recurring practices for dealing with possible challenges (see e.g. Pietikäinen 2016 on permanence in ELF usage). This recurrence can be seen to create normative pressure, or a sense of "oughtness" (Piippo 2012) for speakers to act in certain ways. It is important to note, though, that what actually is common and what speakers experience as common may differ.[1]

b. Norms are *what is expected / accepted* in a particular setting.

In this conceptualisation, the term "norm" describes expectations and beliefs held in a particular community with respect to what kind of linguistic behaviour is acceptable. These expectations and beliefs are not made explicit in the form of written codes (cf. point c below), which means that they may remain relatively implicit from the point of view of discourse participants. The notion of "language ideology" is particularly useful in conceptualising such beliefs. Language ideologies are not interesting simply because they are often relatively ingrained / entrenched and thus have some permanence, but because they are likely to have an impact on language practices; witness for example the influence of "standard language ideology" on language education policy (on language ideologies, see e.g. Milroy 2001; Woolard 1998).

Normative beliefs can be studied by analysing metalanguage, or "language about language", as expressed for example in interview data. As Irvine (2002: 25) points out, participant accounts of sociolinguistic norms are necessarily partial and interested, offered from an individual's specific social position. Interview data on beliefs should therefore be treated as a socially situated representation rather than a straightforward description of community norms. A number of ELF studies (e.g. Hynninen 2016; Kalocsai 2013) have used interviews in this way to analyse speaker beliefs, particularly how ELF users talk about what kinds of Englishes are functional in the speech events they have participated in.

In addition to normative beliefs, it is important to analyse what language users treat as acceptable in their interactions with others. That is, normative beliefs need not be understood

as static, as stable sets of beliefs that ELF users bring to all the interactions they engage in. Instead, we can assume that speakers vary in their normative orientations, depending on their interlocutors, the setting and what kind of speech event they are participating in. We have found Andersen's (2009) concept of "living norms" useful in analysing acceptability and appropriateness as an emerging phenomenon, as a focus of collective negotiation within groups of speakers.

One way of accessing such negotiation is to study interactional data. Such an approach is taken by Hynninen (2016) where interactions between ELF speakers are studied for example by looking at what kinds of English uses speakers intervene in and how they do it (e.g. by correcting another speaker or by commenting on a language feature). The findings suggest that it is important to go beyond standard native Englishes when analysing the normative expectations and beliefs construed in ELF settings. This observation is supported by earlier research on ELF: for example, Hülmbauer (2009) shows that seemingly "incorrect" forms may be treated as "correct" by speakers in particular interactional situations, and Ehrenreich (2009), Kalocsai (2013) and Smit (2010), with focus on three different communities of practice, report of ELF speakers establishing relatively permanent norms relevant for their communities of practice, norms that partly deviate from codified standards.

c. Norms are *what is codified* in or for a particular setting.

This is perhaps the most prototypical lay understanding of norms: norms are what some authority lays out as correct, acceptable or preferable for a given situation, text or interaction. Such norms typically emanate from written codes such as grammars, usage handbooks and language policies or language authorities such as language teachers, editors and language revisers. Codified norms have relative permanence and (apparent) stability and may have broad scope across a variety of settings. Power relations are in operation relating to one party (e.g. speakers of a high prestige native variety) having more symbolic resources (language competence) than another (e.g. L2 users).

It may appear that this third type of conceptualisation is least relevant to ELF as ELF research typically emphasises users' non-conformity to or divergence from codified norms. However, we believe that an understanding of language norms as an imposed, ratified "code" is relevant in the analysis of ELF use, for a variety of reasons:

- Divergence is typically described in ELF studies in relation to a construct such as "ENL norms" or the like, which typically draws on the "norms as what is codified" meaning.
- Codes and standards may have an impact on ELF usage even where "standard English" is not the main normative order which participants orient to (see discussion below).

- There is much discussion in the research field on the implications of ELF for teaching and testing. This raises the question of whether competence in ELF can be described/evaluated without drawing on the meaning of norms as imposed code.

Overall, we believe that it is fruitful for ELF research to be clear about what is meant by the concept of language norm and also to go beyond the dualistic model whereby codified, imposed norms are contrasted with situated, emergent norms that may have no bearing beyond a particular interactional situation. We argue that it is important to consider the complex interplay of codified and emergent norms in ELF communities. Recent studies on ELF data show that the analysis of normative expectations and what participants treat as acceptable linguistic behaviour in interaction helps us to gain valuable insights into participants' understandings, and complements corpus approaches to the description of ELF interactions.

An additional issue of much interest for ELF research is whether we conceptualise norms as stable or dynamic. From the point of view of "norms as code", norms may appear fixed and non-negotiable, while an exploration of "norms as what is common", for example through corpora, usually provides a view into much greater variability. Similarly, speakers' normative expectations and what they treat as acceptable in interaction have been shown to be variable and context-dependent. Thus, the conceptualisation of language norms an analyst chooses to draw on has implications for how stable language norms appear to be.

NORMS AND LANGUAGE REGULATION

On the whole, we find it important to approach norms from a social perspective, given the focus in ELF research on analysing communities and interactions which vary in their stability. This means that we analyse norms as socially negotiated, socially ratified and socially resisted. We will now turn to a theme which emphasises the social nature of norm negotiation, but which ELF research rarely engages with: language regulation. We understand language regulation as practices through which language users monitor, intervene in and manage their own and others' language use (Hynninen 2016). The concept comprises both regulatory practices as they manifest in interaction (e.g. a speaker "correcting" his or her interlocutor's language use) and also those which represent more organised forms of regulation (e.g. institutional language policies). The value of the notion for ELF is that it focuses our attention on the ways in which norms are created, maintained and resisted, and the processes through which normative expectations and beliefs are expressed.

In the literature on ELF (e.g. Seidlhofer 2011), it is typical that two types of norms are referred to: "native-like English"/ "ENL norms" and situated norms emerging in ELF interactions. The focus of analysis is how speakers use their varying linguistic resources

creatively and intelligibly while not fully conforming to norms of native-like usage. As noted above, ELF usage is typically described with reference to how it diverges from ENL.

Norms are often analysed in terms of how they are negotiated during interaction (rather than imposed), and speakers as orienting to the demands of the situation rather than pre-existing standards. A good example of such discourse in the ELF literature is the following: "norms are tacitly understood to be established during the interaction, within the current possibilities … they are primarily regulated by interactional exigencies rather than what native speakers would say, or would find correct, or 'normal', or appropriate" (Seidlhofer 2011: 18). We find this view overly generic: while it may describe language use in everyday non-institutional interaction, in many institutional settings the situation is likely to be more complex. Participants may be obliged to orient both to norms which are transient and situation-specific *and* to those which have more permanence and scope beyond the particular interactional situation, including codified norms. In any case, this is a question that needs to be empirically investigated rather than assumed.

Moreover, it is not a generic feature of ELF interactions that participants are free agents who can just choose what works for them locally. There are many contexts where speakers face sanctions if they fail to orient to norms relevant to the situation, and such norms may include codified norms. In order to understand ELF scenarios, we cannot focus solely on individual creativity. The notion of language regulation is helpful specifically in mapping the ways in which language users are constrained, whether it is through top-down language policies or more ad hoc practices of intervening in language in everyday situations.

We suggest that especially when studying institutional interactions, analysts need to look at what relatively stable practices of regulation are in place in the setting they are studying. Such constraints include, for example, how access to a given setting is regulated (see e.g. Jenkins 2014). There may be formal language competence requirements before a person is allowed entry to ELF-using institutional contexts (e.g. English-medium higher education, business meetings, EU press conferences). Regulation also includes practices whereby participants' language use is monitored and intervened in. Such practices also need mapping since they vary across different settings and genres. For example, while English-language research articles by L2 users are typically objects of language revision prior to publication, this kind of regulation is usually not directed at research blogs (see Mauranen 2013).

The presence of relatively permanent practices of regulating language use means that participants may orient to codified norms in some ways and at specific moments even in settings where English is not regularly policed with regard to correctness norms. We can assume that the more institutionalised the setting is, the more regulation we will encounter.

We will now move on to discuss some data examples which illustrate practices of language regulation. The examples relate both to normative expectations and codified norms. When we analyse the regulation of "norms as what is expected / accepted", a key focus of interest is speaker beliefs about language use (for example how speakers construe "correct" English). Another focus is speaker expectations about language use (e.g. to what extent this "correct" English is seen to matter in a particular setting). To see what participants actually treat as acceptable, focus should also be laid on language regulation as it is manifested in interaction (for example when and how speakers "correct" each other).

An analysis of the role of codified norms in language regulation involves, for example, exploring documents with a language regulatory intent (e.g. guidelines and manuals) as they are made relevant in a specific setting, including the processes through which such documents are created, disseminated and managed. It is also necessary to investigate participant understandings of the relevance of such documents and the ways in which they come to be used (or not used) as instruments of regulation.

EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF REGULATION

Below we exemplify different forms of language regulation in academic contexts. Issues such as language choice (which languages can and should be used in specific settings) are typically regulated through institutional language policies, but language "quality" also often becomes an object of regulation. For instance, many forms of published research writing are heavily regulated through mechanisms which impose obligatory language revision prior to publication. Moreover, most institutions have formally established language competence requirements for applicants into English-medium programmes. Both types of regulation draw on "norms as code", that is, Standard English is the main reference point in evaluating language use.

In the following we illustrate the regulation of "norms as what is expected / accepted" in academic speech events. The data presented in the examples (and analysed in more detail in Hynninen 2016) come from English-medium instructional contexts at a multidisciplinary university in Finland.[2] The first example illustrates negotiation of acceptability in the form of language commenting. The example is from a seminar session in forestry, where a student (S8, L1 Arabic) has just given a presentation based on a written research report, and the participants are discussing the presentation/report. T2 (L1s Finland Swedish and Finnish), one of the seminar teachers, takes up language as a topic.

Example 1

T2: er er <FIRST NAME S8> correctly used the the th- th- the name of the country as the sudan remember that this is the the name of the country the sudan like the

gambia there are a few country names where you have the although the modern usage is (to omit it) the only thing you have to be con- consequent either you always say the sudan the sudan or then without the but there are this is one of the few country names where where it is

BS2: [so why (is it why is it)]

T2: [er and th- the] government uses it's the republic of the sudan that's (the) official name of the country

<TURNS OMITTED>

T2: ((...)) but it's also correct to say without the [nowadays] <S2> [mhm-hm] </S2> especially in scientific contexts

As the example illustrates, T2 takes on the role of language regulator by commenting on the use of the form "the Sudan" in a student's presentation/report. The teacher first suggests that it is correct to refer to the name of the country using the definite article "the". He evaluates the students' use of the article as correct, by referring to the official name of the country, as well as to a rule according to which some country names include "the". What is interesting in this example, though, is that the teacher suggests that despite this, "the modern usage is (to omit it)" and that "especially in scientific contexts" it is "correct" to also talk about "Sudan", that is, to refer to the name of the country without the definite article. What we see here, then, are alternative sources for norm construction. The teacher accepts a form that he regards as correct in scientific contexts, even if the form, according to the teacher, is not correct ENL usage. Example 1 thus illustrates the way the relevance of codified norms may be negotiated in interaction. The example further shows that non-native speakers of English can and do act as language regulators in ELF interactions, also when native speakers of English are present. A number of studies have suggested that in academic ELF contexts, academic expertise may override native speaker status (see e.g. Mauranen 2014; Hynninen 2016).

The second example, from a tutored group work meeting in biology, similarly illustrates language commenting as a form of language regulation, but in this case, correctness is construed simply in relation to native speakers of English.

Example 2

S3: and for example if you check(ed) the language it (would) be easier to, speak (right) <NS5> mhm-hm </NS5> like @right@ right way

In the example, a student (S3, L1 Finnish) turns to another student (NS5, L1 Canadian English) for language support in proposing that the native speaker of English check the

language of the group's presentation slides that they were preparing together. The native speaker of English is construed as a language authority, who has the means to judge what is the "right way" of using the language. This suggests reliance on ENL as an/the accepted form of English and a willingness to defer to the presumed expertise of the native speaker. NS5 also commented in an interview that it was a typical practice among the students to assign her as a proof reader for collaborative writing tasks simply because of her status as a native speaker of English. It is clear, then, that speakers also orient to expectations concerning language use outside particular interactions.

To exemplify analysis of speaker beliefs and expectations, we now turn to research interview data to see what it is that speakers bring with them to the interactions. The data also come from Hynninen (2016), from interviews conducted with the students and teachers participating in the interactions analysed. Example 3 is from a research interview with a student (L1 Brazilian Portuguese) and illustrates how talk about language can reveal both speaker beliefs about language use and speaker expectations of language use in particular situations.

Example 3[3]

> ((...)) because here <I.E. IN FINLAND> it's not an english er country everybody speaks a more or less correct english and because everyone understand each other you don't pay attention that you are sometimes making some mistakes especially pronunciation or or some grammar mistakes but everyone is understanding you but when i had the chance to talk to somebody from america or from some other english-speaking country then i realise that i have bad english if i have to pronounce (ev-) everything correctly and try to make me er to to m- to make the other understand me well @@

In the account, the interviewee separates two different types of interactions, talking to non-native speakers as opposed to native speakers of English. The need to orient to (codified) ENL norms is construed as relevant when talking to native speakers, whereas "mistakes" are not construed as a problem in ELF interactions. This suggests that speakers' beliefs about language use (e.g. what is correct English) and their expectations about language use in specific settings (e.g. how English is used in ELF encounters) may not coincide. The account further illustrates how speakers may expect different norms to be relevant in different settings or with different people, and also how they may evaluate their own language use differently in relation to the contexts or positions from which they are talking. This also raises the issue of perceived social advantage of particular forms of English and how such perceptions may influence speakers' regulatory practices (see Wang 2013).

The three examples together illustrate a certain discrepancy between speakers' notions of correctness and what is expected and accepted in ELF interaction (see also Hynninen 2016). Even if ELF users have been found to often attach correctness to (codified) ENL, analysis of interview talk suggests that such correctness is not always construed as relevant for ELF interaction (as suggested by example 3). Analysis of ELF interaction suggests that such correctness may not necessarily be oriented to in interaction either (as illustrated in example 1). As discussed in relation to example 2, though, irrespective of whether such correctness is treated as relevant in a particular interaction or not, it may of course be construed as a relevant norm outside the particular interaction. It also seems that the mode of communication is an important factor. Hynninen (2016) found that more variability was accepted for speech than for writing in the context of English-medium instruction, and that the participants were more concerned with correctness in relation to writing than speech (however, cf. example 2 where correcting the written English on slides is seen as an aid to speaking correctly).

Another form of institutionally organised language regulation in many universities is provided by staff training courses intended as support for lecturers teaching in English. To exemplify regulation in one such course, let us look at example 4.[4] In the example, one of the course instructors (T1, L1 Finnish) comments on the English used by one of the participating lecturers (S2, L1 Finnish). The lecturer has just given a short practice lecture which is now discussed in class.

Example 4

T1: ((...)) but a few things that i know erm are i often hear, in in finland so (you meet that in) other international contexts too that erm strictly speaking are a bit strange when you know if if we want(ed) to use some kind of erm proper english if if something like that exists er and on- one of these things is erm, (i believe) <NAME S2> said you said something can be found in net <FINNISH> netissä </FINNISH> in finnish <S2> mhm </S2> what would be the you know strictly speaking what what do you know if we want to be a bit more correct everyone understands in net, but that's not the the phrase that would be used among let's say canadian english speakers

The example shows that the instructor pays attention to the use of a particular preposition in the participating lecturer's talk when the preposition diverges from (codified) ENL norms (see the reference to Canadian English speakers). What is notable, though, is the extensive hedging in the instructor's turn: "strictly speaking" the usage could be "a bit more correct", "if something like that [i.e. proper English] exists". The primary aim of the course was to encourage lecturers to teach in English and allow them to practice lecturing in a supportive

environment. Thus, we may assume that in terms of regulation, the instructor did not wish to establish rigorous top-down correctness norms for English-medium instruction, but to generate awareness and negotiation of what kind of English is functional in EMI settings, for example in terms of values such as intelligibility ("everyone understands in net").

We have selected these four examples to illustrate the negotiability of language norms in ELF settings. All the examples suggest that norm negotiation is a feature of ELF interactions and that even in a language teaching setting, the instructor is careful not to impose specific norms on academic speech events. The challenge is to understand when regulation remains situational, and when it has a more long-term bearing on language use and gains some degree of permanence. What is clear, though, is that without focusing on language regulation as a social practice and as experienced by speakers, we cannot understand the range of different norms speakers may need to orient to.

CONCLUSION

We have argued in this chapter for an approach to language norms that emphasises the process (how norms develop situationally through practices of language regulation), rather than the product (what "the norms" are). In this approach, norms are understood as socially based, rather than as something natural, pre-given or stable, and as ideologically invested and necessarily subject to negotiation and struggle. This means that norms need to be analysed in terms of what contexts they arise in, and how and by whom they are promoted, maintained and resisted. The assumption that norms are context-bound and situated also means that a fair amount of variability in what participants treat or ratify as acceptable is to be expected. For example, there may be variation in the degree to which speakers intervene in the use of a particular feature. To approach norms in this way is particularly relevant for researching complex language contact situations such as ELF interactions, where we can expect some negotiation of norms, simply because of speakers' different linguistic backgrounds. However, focusing on the ways in which language is regulated situationally may very well reveal new insights concerning the formation of norms also in other, more homogenous and stable settings.

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Speaker codes:

S#	Student (non-native speaker of English)

NS#	Student (native speaker of English)
BS#	Student (bilingual speaker with English as one of the L1s)
T#	Teacher/instructor
Transcription symbols:	
,	Brief pause 2–3 sec.
te-	Unfinished utterances
[text 1] [text 2]	Overlapping speech (approximate, shown to the nearest word, words not split by overlap tags)
(text)	Uncertain transcription
@@	Laughter
@text@	Spoken laughter
<S#> text </S#>	Back channelling when marked within another speaker's turn
<NAME S#>	Names of participants in the same speech event
<TEXT>	Descriptions and comments between tags
((…))	Text omitted from transcription
bold	Portion of transcript emphasised by authors

NOTES

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1. We are here drawing on Andersen's (2009) distinction between "descriptive" and "experiential" norms.

2. The data were collected for the "Studying in English as a Lingua Franca" (SELF) project directed by Professor Anna Mauranen at the University of Helsinki. The project received funding from the University of Helsinki Research Funds for the three-year period of 2008–2010. For more information, see http://www.helsinki.fi/elfa/self.

3. Note that interviewer back channelling has been removed from the transcript.

4. These data were also collected as part of the SELF research project, see note 2.

RELATED TOPICS IN THE HANDBOOK

English as a lingua franca and communities of practice (S. Ehrenreich)
Standard English and the dynamics of ELF variation (B. Seidlhofer)
ELF and the EU/wider Europe (T. Sherman)
Translingual Practice and ELF (S. Canagarajah & D. Kimura)

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Ø This book includes a conceptual discussion on norms in ELF.

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